



---

## Mr. V.K. Calla

---

Interviewer: Prof. Anjali Monteiro

Camera/Sound: Prof. KP Jayasankar

Date:-19<sup>th</sup> September 2011

Place: Bangalore

Keywords: Class of 1950-52, Nagpada Neighbourhood house, Andheri campus, Library, field work, Dr. Kumarappa, Dr. Behram Mehta, Dr. Murthy, Dr. Kaikobad, Miss Banerjee, Mrs. Roosevelt, Dr. Reckless

Mr. Calla did his Dip. SSA from TISS, specialising in Labour Welfare, in 1952. Since then, he has held several senior management positions in India and overseas. He has been involved in teaching/training and has also written and published on personnel management issues.



0:00:00.000

AM: Thank you for giving us this interview. We would like to take a walk down memory lane and recall your student days. So could you please tell us how you came to join TISS and what was your experience like in the initial period there.

K: Sure. At the very outset, I must thank god that Jamshedji Nusserwanji Tata was born in India because the house of Tata has done great things for India, and many institutions they have founded, but the Tata Institute has been one of their major things. And whenever any good thing has happened to me in life, I thank Nusserwanji Tata. Jamshedji was a great, great Indian. Even Gandhiji has acknowledged that. And if evidence is required, how he has benefitted the average India, graduates like me and my wife, they are the evidence, shining example of how Nusserwanji's whistle has brought glory to India. Whatever little we could do in our life, that is not so important as the fact that he had the whistle. When I was at the institute and Sulochana, my wife, we were there, Naval Tata used to come, Prof Choksey used to come, Prof John Mathai of course, never came, he only addressed our convocation, but those were the people who made us feel that we had lot to learn from the Bombay House and House of Tatas. Therefore, the first tribute I want to pay is to Jamshedji Nusserwanji Tata who did this great thing for us. The second factor I would like to mention is, we grew up in Gandhi-Nehru era. And the value system which we imbibed as students, were directly related to Gandhi-Nehru era. I remember, when Netaji, when INA, when first of all Shahnawaz Khan Saab's trial etc came, we were children in school and college. And we went, step by step, to each house to collect 1 paisa, 2 paisa, 4 paisa, and they used to say, we know your father, we know your mother, why have you come to collect 2 paisa? We said no, we want to help the INA. And that is what it was. I grew up in a town called



Sojat city, small town. Then, the first thing that happened to me was that...I was curious like all students, all children are, about how others are, playmates and all. In a little piece of paper in which groceries were wrapped, I read one sentence, Caste is the worst enemy of India. And that sentence...I had just learnt how to read English. That sentence stuck in my memory. Now I know it was Mr. Gandhi's article somewhere or the other. And therefore, forever I believed that caste is the real enemy of Indian society. Then I came to the town called Jodhpur city which is the capital city of Marwad. At that time, Marwad state. And when I went to college, I found Jawaharlalji visited our college. I was in the first row with my friend, and I had a good look at Jawaharlal, and two things impressed me the most. The education minister of...who was the cousin of Maharaja of Jodhpur, he came late by two minutes. Panditji just looked at his watch, and he uttered one sentence..."A lady or a gentleman is one who gives more to society when he is an adult than what he has received from society. " And he stopped. That impressed me so much, that during our summer vacation, in the hot, hot desert villages of Marwad state, we used to go, cook our own food, work, sweep, clean, talk in the evening about adult literacy and all that.

0:04:56.900

I joined Darbar High School which is a secular school in Marwad state, not based on caste. And throughout my life, caste has been a bugbear in my mind. Anyone who talks of caste, I say thank you. Then, my professor in college said, join the Tata Institute. I said 'What is that?' He said, no we find that you are inclined to do that kind of thing. So I wrote to Tata Institute, they sent me a brochure, I read about it, and I came and I got admission. The question was, where is the money?



My father was a police inspector, and he had retired by that time, but my father said 'Go ahead, I'll somehow manage it..that you go through.' because I was very keen to see what is social science, what is social work like, and therefore, I came to Bombay.

AM: So could you talk about your first perceptions of Bombay...

K: When I landed at Bombay Central from Jodhpur by Gujarat Mail, within 5 minutes I decided that I will live in Bombay only. The thing that impressed me was the neat row of taxis, yellow top. And the queue at bus stops. We came to Neighbourhood House and there I saw my classmates, and the impression that I had carried in my mind was that everyone was a big author, a great researcher, because the brochure talked like that. And then I asked my classmates what they were, and they said they were raw students. I had, by that time, gone to Nagpur to do my Law. And when I was at Nagpur, I went to Seva Gram and I went to Wardha. And I had written to Gandhiji, that what I want to do...I want to join the Servants of India Society or what should I do? Kriplaniji wrote back to me, 'You are too young for us, please go into the wide world and get all the experiences...' Neighbourhood House was a Church place where the Tata Institute was founded in '39 I think. And now, it was converted into Boys Hostel...when the institute had shifted to Andheri. And, I looked at...I came on a Sunday, and Monday was a working day. On Monday we went by train, electric train..first time I sat in the electric train, went to Andheri, at Andheri, all the students were greatly pleased with meeting each other, the seniors and all that. And we went by the station wagon to the institute premises which was a set of bungalows. Two bungalows, and school..the classes were in one and the offices, etc were in the second one, then out houses were occupied by drivers, some staff, and some kitchen and all that. This is what happened.



AM: But, Nagpada Neighbourhood House, that area, what was it like?

K: The Neighbourhood House itself was a very honourable place. I never locked my trunk. Whatever little money I had, I used to keep it that way. It was so safe. We were on the second floor. And the people around were lower middle class and all that, it was not a very clean place and all, but somehow Neighbourhood House was headed by Reverend Roy Long, who did wonderful work. He used to organize debates in the evening, and I used to take lot of part in the debates. He used to talk about various things to the people around. And prayers, of course, the church services were there and all. That is how Nagpada Neighbourhood House was. Dr. Murthy used to live next...Dr. Murthy was our professor. He used to live next to Neighbourhood House, and Neighbourhood House had no kitchen, or no catering facilities for us. We used to go for tea to the restaurant, Rolex. Rolex restaurant was a headquarter of all our, all the students. It used to be run by Iranis. But the Iranis were so fatherly that they used to say 'Where is that fellow, why has he not come and taken tea yet?' We used to take tea and breakfast, all there only. And dinner, we used to go to JJ Hospital, where the medical students used to run their hostel, we would beg of them to roll us, to enroll us and we used to eat khaana there. This is how we used to live. 2-3 years we passed there. But living in Neighbourhood House was a good experience. The premises were good, they were clean. There was an attendant called Hari. Hari's son was a problem, and the institute people were doing a lot of case work with that boy. But that boy was a little anti-social and all that kind of thing. This is how it was. From Neighbourhood House to Bombay Central, we used to walk back and forth, and this is how we lived in Neighbourhood House. Neighbourhood House used to have wooden beds, and the bed bugs will bite us at night. I was not used to bed bugs, because I came from a dry place. But this is how it happened, and we



somehow managed. The friendship that we had with each other was fantastic. And it helped us to get over all kinds of difficulty that we were facing. We were not used to that kind of thing. I was not used to that kind of thing. Although I didn't come from a rich home, but I found that was a little trying. We studied a lot, we did lot of drama, we did lot of singing. There used to be a Mr. Chakravarty. He used to be a great devotee of Tagore songs. And he would make us sing all Tagore songs. "Ek lo, chalo re", "Mukt Kar Bai". I still remember those songs. And he used to make us act like Bengali drama...that used to take place and all that. But that helped us to forget all those things, whatever was happening.

0:11:41.346

This is how we lived in Neighbourhood House. I always think that Neighbourhood House was an island of peace in that troubled area. There used to be constant trouble about the...the policeman would go around, the people would fight...and Mr. Murthy and Mr. Dutta, who were my seniors and very good people, great friends, they used to say 'We will now go at night outside', I said 'I am not coming down. I'm not coming on the foot path, and I can't go.' They said 'No, no, we must see what life is.' I said, 'I can't see that.' This is how it used to be. It rained a lot in Bombay and I came from a dry place...in Jodhpur, it used to rain twice in a year, that's all. Twice, thrice, that's all. And now I found Bombay rain terrific. To carry books, umbrella, and go by train, used to be little trying. But living in Bombay city was one of the greatest experiences of my life. And I still call myself a Bombay man.

AM: What was Bombay like in those days...what was student life in Bombay like in those days?



K: The main influence that Bombay had on me was the extroversion of a closed personality. There used to be a lot of organizations which were run by enlightened people like the Bombay Psychology Society, which used to meet every Wednesday in Wilson College. We used to go there and learn...Dr. Lalkaka, used to be a psychiatrist, and a great man. He used to talk to us on various other things. There used to be other church meetings where they would talk of social objectives, social problems. There used to be many people from each state in India, and that used to help us a lot as to how....actually I must confess, before I came to Bombay I knew there was only one Madras because in our state, all top ranking people were Madrasis. When I came to Bombay, I knew that there is a Mysore, there is a Tamil Nadu, there is a Kerala, there is Andhra. I never knew all those. We used to call all of them Madrasis. In the North, we call all of them Madrasis. Like here, they call everyone a Marwadi. That is the kind of thing that happened. Bombay city, the people, and in subsequent years, when I worked in Bombay, the neighbours were like our own brothers and sisters. The Bombay men talk Bombay Hindi which I took 6 months to learn, although Hindi is my mother tongue in a way. And, the neighbours were so nice. Just as the students were nice to each other. I used to get headache occasionally. it was due to indigestion or the food, I was not used to. But they would immediately come, help me, talk to me, and say what can be done, have a lemonade, have a cold drink, that kind of thing.

0:14:52.400

Therefore, that helpful nature of a Bombay man is some shining example of bonhomie. (). It is India in miniature. This is how Bombay was. We went to Marine Drive. Of course, I had never



seen an ocean, because I came from Thar Desert, and it used to be fascinating. Juhu, of course, at that time was a wonderful place about which I will talk little later. This is the kind of thing that happened. Bombay society was so great, it has impressed me, my children, everyone. And nowadays here, I call myself a Bombay man, because I must have enlightened human interest of helping each other. Whatever place you come from, there were Keralites, they did not know Hindi, but they learnt Hindi, there were Punjabis who talked a different language, but they learnt Hindi, there were Bengalis who talked....so we were all people, amalgamated, got gelled into one society. That is the greatness of Bombay. Later on, I became friendly with some of the industrialists, well known industrialists, and I found that they were...they had contributed a lot to the gelling of various people from different parts of India to Bombay. And that is how Bombay became a great city which has impressed me to the very bone of my personality. You see, when we...when I first got down at Andheri station, of course these were new experiences...I had never seen electric trains and all that...the first person that impressed me was Pathak. He was the driver of our station wagon. He was so humane. He knew who was new, who was not new and all. And he was very friendly 'Kahaan se aaye ho? Kya karte ho? Mataji, Pitaji kya karte hain? Kitne bhai behen?' And Pathak, later on I found out, was friendly to all the students in the institute. He and his wife used to live in an outhouse, in a hutment...and as the bell will ring between classes, he will say 'Aao, ek cup chai pi lo.' We used to feel bad, that perhaps they did not have money, or should we take their tea and all that...they said, 'bephikar ho ke idhar aa ke chai pi lene ka.' His wife was a wonderful lady, mature lady who used to think of us as her own children or...they had no children. To think of us and...they used to...at Ganesh Utsav, they would call us, 'Mithai khao', at Diwali, Holi, they will say, "Humne ye banaya, aap khaiye," and we used to feel bad, that he's a driver. But he was, he was not a driver, he was an enlightened soul. Wonderful man,



good man, great man, and this is what impressed me in Tata Institute, first thing, the driver. The staff was good. The support staff was good, about which I'll talk later. The next one was the wonderful library the institute had which was run by a lady called Blossom Russel. She was a South African citizen and she used to look after all this, but she became so friendly that I was wondering how people can become so friendly, as if she was part of my life. And used to give good books, "This book is good...that chapter did you read...look at that.." and library was a wonderful place to be in. Blossom, I still remember her with great respect. There is another person, and her name is Miss Dhanmay Taraporewala. She was the fieldwork guide and I was never in her group. I was with Mr. Kakobad. Danmay was a great lady unrecognized by the society. She used to treat us like children. We used to call her Dhanmay out of affection, meaning thereby, mother. And she taught us method, she taught us affection, she taught us how to be friendly with boys and girls, she taught us what for are we doing fieldwork, what for are we doing practical work. And constantly, day in and day out, she used to be very friendly with us.

0:19:33.578

Dhanmay was friendly...Mr. Murthy, Mr. Dutta and all, these people were of course very friendly because they were seniors, and I also became. To me she was especially nice, and I remember her with great respect that she forgot what...I was not in her group at all, because she was in the group work section and I was in Personal Management side. But always she trusted me and taught me how to...I still remember, she taught me how to keep the waste, properly, methodically arranged in the drawer, and I remember Danmay. This is how she was. She was a



fieldwork guide, which was not considered to be a faculty position, but she was there. Then, I will talk about my professors, who were all very great intellects. Dr. Kumarappa was of course the director, and he was very reserved, always frighteningly reserved. He used to talk of Indian society. He had the same jokes every year. And if you had the previous seniors' notes, you could say he will tell this joke, he will use word by word, he'll use the entire thing, exactly like a tape. There used to be Dr. Behram Mehta. A very great man. He was a colleague of Jawaharlal Nehru and Yusuf Meherally, who was the mayor of Bombay and a very great patriot. Dr. Mehta was a...being a Parsi was a extroverted gentleman. He'll come, sit down on the chair and start talking. No notes, nothing. And we'd listen to him, fascinated, that what kind of person is he...he is talking on and....and I used to, I still remember, I used to say God, give me this capacity that I can talk like this. Later on, by grace of God, by hard work, by reading, by all that, I do the same. I sit down on the chair...I've been taking lot of MBA classes now, on my subject and all. I sit down, and I start talking, and luckily somehow, it clicks. Dr. Behram Mehta, now of course he's no more...but he was a very humane person, very humane. And when we passed, Sulochana and I, no one knew that we were going to get married, but we were friends and he said, where are you chaps now, what are you going to do. So Sulochana said, Sir we want to go to Canada. He said, for what do you want to go to Canada. Foolishly I said I want to study Indian Labour problem, he said, you fool, in Canada you'll study Indian Labour problem...we stopped, we said now we will only live in India and work here. Dr. Mehta was a wonderful person, very great man, and his knowledge apart, he had done a lot of good work in Gujarat...the tribal people and Jawaharlalji and Yusuf Meherally were his colleagues. Dr. Murthy took our Personnel Management, and he was a very friendly person. He had written a thesis in Ramayana, I think. But he did Sociology, Personnel Management, and he used to invite a lot of these foreign



personal managers...at that time there were only foreign personal managers...to our class to talk about Personal Management. Dr. P.N. Prabhu had just returned from USA. Dr. Prabhu was a great psychologist, internationally known and his professor Dr. Murphy had also come at the same time to do a study on social tensions because of that refugee problem in India and I was also part of that project.

0:23:59.261

Dr. Prabhu was so intelligent, he was so...his standard of intellectual exposition was so great that it was very impressive. Mr. Kakobad was a young man. He was a student of Tata Institute, then got a scholarship to go to USA and came back. And we were the first batch. He used to feel a bit shy. When he came the first time in the lecture, he started talking about some welfare. So I told him, Sir, Akbar and these Asoka and Akbar and all, these people had done so much of welfare. So he said, Ah, that's a right thing, present a paper within a week. Next week I had to present a paper and I kicked myself, why did I open my mouth. But, it was, to the credit of Mr. Kakobad, that I did hard work and presented a paper on what is the welfare philosophy of India, and how our Akbar, Asoka and great people did all that. That was wonderful. Mr. Kakobad liked me so much that he took me for fieldwork to Gamadia colony. Gamadia colony is a Parsi center near Bombay Central, and I did lot of work. To work with Parsi adolescent boys and girls was a challenging thing. I knew Gujarati by now, because in Bombay everyone knows Gujarati and Marathi, but I found that the adolescent boys and girls were so....they were like soda water bottle being opened. They were so vigorous. And I was not such a sportsman. I took them for a picnic,



and some of them started swimming. I was praying to god that nothing should happen, otherwise I will have to kill myself. And they used to be very very extroverted. There used to be a lot of intermixing of boys and girls which was a wonderful thing to see for a person like me, but it was Mr. Kakobad who continued his friendship throughout my association with Bombay and the institute. Then of course, there was Dr. Lorenzo, who later on became the director of Labour Bureau, Shimla, and when, on my honeymoon, we went Jaipur, accidentally I met him. And he said, Kya kar rahe ho? I said, Abhi hum Shaadi karke aya...toh kaun, achha Sulochana, aake...come and stay with me. We stayed in his bungalow in Shimla, and it was so nice. He had married a lady from Jaipur at that time and it was nice. Therefore, there used to be teachers who're...Miss Banerjee used to be there. Mr. Banerjee was a Case Worker and that was a new subject, I had never studied that. She used to be friendly. But being a lady, we used to be a little aloof from her. But she did this case work and she persuaded me to go into case work specialization...I said no. I will only go and work in industry because I have to make money to pay for my family's upkeep and all.

0:27:28.484

Later on, when I was posted in Saharanpur, I found that Miss Banerjee came from that place and her family was a well known family. So, we invited...and her brother and bhabhi and all the people came and said, oh, you're the students...both of them are your students...see this is what has happened, and it was a nice thing. Intellectually, Tata Institute, the library contributed a lot to me. My personal contacts with the teachers enriched my intellect a lot. And I used to find...Dr.



Mehta used to be frightening. He had a very tough exterior, but really he was a very childlike person. Sometimes I would ask him questions. He would bulldoze me into his way of thinking. I would say, no if I don't agree, Dr. Sir, maaf karo and all...he said no, no, no, this is the way. He said no, it can't be. And I can't, naturally, I couldn't argue with Dr. Mehta, he was such a great intellect. But, the personal friendship with the teachers...luckily somehow every teacher liked me, except Dr. Lorenzo who did Statistics. And I'm a failure at Maths. So that friendship, Mr. Kakobad, Dhanmay, who was a very great lady, people did not recognize, but I must pay all my tribute to her. That she treated me like her own son, and taught me so many things in life. And then of course, when she knew, first of all, Sulochana and I were to get married, she gave a lot of advice to us...how to adjust to life and all that. Therefore the friendliness with teachers was a very good thing. More importantly, the friendship with the student group was so inspiring, I must here admit my debt to my seniors, Mr. Dutta, Mr. Murthy, Mr. Gaekwad and Mr. Paiwa He was a Ceylonese Reverend Father and a very great man, very argumentative. Ceylon society is very different, they had no inhibitions. So with Dr. Mehta they used to have terrific arguments. We couldn't do that. We grew up in India, he grew up in Ceylon. And he used to say, no Dr. you are absolutely wrong, and Dr. will say, look, how can I be wrong, this is what it is...oh god...we used to have terrific enjoying things. The food was...I, you see, this is the only evidence of my caste. We are Brahmins. My parents were Brahmins, I don't believe in anything. And we don't eat garlic, onion, and various other vegetables. Here, no one bothered about anything, and I used to starve myself. Feed myself tea and toast. I lived on tea and toast for a long time. And there the food was terrible. It used to be supplied in the outhouses. The cooks were all from a place which I don't want to mention and they could not make the food of the Indian kind because we were all from different states. One person from each state they used to admit at that time.

---

**School of Media and Cultural Studies**

Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India

All rights reserved



0:31:12.484

So this is how it was. And food was not satisfactory. But I used to drink tea and carry on. Which made me feel hungry all the time. And I told Miss Banerjee. I thought she was a Bengali, but really she was from Lahore, and settled...after partition, settled in Saharanpur. So she said look, why don't you eat chocolates? But where was the money to eat chocolates, we had hardly any money. And this is the kind of thing that happened. Somehow the library books, the friendship of my colleagues, especially these people, Murthy and Dutta, they continued to be part of my family. They've seen children grow, and all that. And friendship of two, three teachers, above all Dhanmay, Miss Taraporewala, these helped me go through like anything. This is what happened. When I was at the institute, Mrs. Roosevelt visited us due to Dr. Kumarappa's friendship or whatever. Mrs. Roosevelt was a tall, huge lady and she had been a journalist. And, FDR of course, was a hero at that time. Mrs. Roosevelt came, talked to us. Dr. J.C. Kumarappa, Gandhiji's economic interpreter, he came. He was Dr. Kumarappa's elder or younger brother. Then, what impressed me most was Mr. Naval Tata used to come to our school. Twice he has come during my time. He used to sit down with us and talk, how, what are you doing, where is your hometown, what is your father, what is your brother, all that kind of thing. Mr. Naval Tata was so humble, that you used to feel little frightened that a man about whom we read all these books and papers is sitting next to us. Prof. Choksi was one of the directors. He used to come and talk to us. And they used to mix with us in a manner that made me feel that look, when you become great, actually you have to be very humble. You can't say, look, I am a Tata, therefore I have...founded this school, all that. They never did that. Wonderful people. We were invited to



Bombay House for medical checkup and various things. And Bombay house was such an impressive mausoleum, romantic place. Place where Nusserwanji and JRD and these people came. And therefore, I repeat, whenever anything good has happened to me and my family, I first thank Nusserwanji Jamshedji Tata that he made us in a way that we could do something in life. Otherwise I would have been an advocate. I would have made little money here and there, that's all. But when I came to Tata Institute, it opened my intellect a lot. And today, by grace of god, wherever I go, and I lecture a lot in MBA, last 6 months I have stopped working because I'm in mid 80s now...and wherever I go, I first pay my tribute to the house of the Tatas.

0:34:41.730

That those are the people who had a vision about India. He would never have thought that India would have been like this, but he had the vision that all boys and girls must grow and we are the beneficiaries of the munificence of Jamshedji Tata. The Tata Institute, 2 and a half years, ours was the last batch of 2 and a half years. On one Sunday morning, Dr. Kumarappa said, you all come to the school. We went to the institute. He took us in the station wagon to the present location of Tata Institute where we did the ground breaking ceremony. We all took one pick axe and dug two, three holes there. And Dr. Kumarappa, after little pooja and all, he did the first ground breaking, and we all did that. Now of course, the school is there. Then, I got into one Multi National, and by grace of god, I have been posted abroad. I have lived abroad with children and wife and all, and learned a lot. Every where I've gone, I've said, if you find anything good in me, much of it is due to the Tatas. The house of Tatas has done great things to India.



When we become graduates and all, people don't realise what Jamshedji thought India would be like. And JRD and Naval Tata and now Mr. Ratan Tata. My...one of my sons-in-law is working with Tata motors in senior management. He tells me that they practice exactly what we used to read in books about personal management about industrial relations and all. Those are the people who treat their employees exactly like what they wrote in the books. Therefore, I know that R.M Lala's book, Creation of Wealth, which is a wonderful book about house of Tatas that what they wrote in the book is actually being translated on to the field and the Tatas are not only talking big. Mr. Ratan Tata...he describes to me how Ratan Tata works. Like hell he works. He has a helicopter, comes from Bombay House to Puna, Tata Motors and works day and night and he makes the managers work like mad. And he says get me results, this is the way, and yet, with all ethical...business ethics, CSR i.e. Corporate Social Responsibility. All those things about which we read, he is practicing. That is the greatness of House of Tatas. I have tried to emulate them a little in my own minor way, many a time I fail. A little success I have here and there and I'm known as a...I've practiced here in Bangalore...for the honest second opinion they will come to me and I will tell them exactly what the strength of the case is, what is the weakness. And that's all. They come, they come, they don't come, they don't come. That's all that happens. Therefore, my friends, while we get involved in our career and day-to-day matters and family matters, remember House of Tatas is a great institution in India. I have got no other interest but to praise Jamshedji. This is how the institute is.

0:38:18.641



You see, the first day when I joined, we were saying hello, how are you, where are you from and all that. After two days, we saw a girl who was smiling all the time, and with everyone, whether she knew him or not, she was smiling and talking and all that. And I used to say this is wonderful, how she doesn't know us...anything, but she used to talk and all that. And she talked to me also...and we said fine. After a little while, I started noticing her. That she was very extroverted and friendly to everybody, which I was not. I was very reserved, I was trying to assess everyone...how intellectually deep he is, what is he doing, what is his background and all that. Then, slowly we became friendly and started talking about each other and all...and then slowly we became very friendly. But the relationship of boys and girls at Tata Institute at that time was so dignified that even no one knew...except this Murthy and Dutta and my group, five, six people knew that we were going to get married. Otherwise no one even suspected. They said Sulochana is friendly to everyone, she's friendly to everyone. That's all. The relationship used to be very dignified, and I know this...that there were three sets of classmates who had married earlier than us. We were the fourth set of classmates who had got married at that time. I think ours was the ninth batch. At that time....of course later on I found that Sulochana's sobering influence on my personality was terrific. I was very excitable, I thought competition...because I had to compete, I had to get into the industry...when I went...when I found out that someone was trying to be a little obstructionist, I would be very aggressive saying that offense is the best form of defense. That factor was very much toned down through Sulochana's experience. She has been a wonderful person. Unfortunately, she expired four years ago and now I'm living...I have got a house of my own, but I stay here most of the time. My daughters...I've got three daughters. Two of my daughters are running a Montessori environment. My third daughter is married to this gentleman who is in Tata Motors. They are in Poona . I have got four grand children and by



grace of god, Tata influence, whatever...their value system is very much like mine, which need not be. Because they can have a different life and all that. All our family, we have married our classmates of our own choice, because that sentence haunts me all the time...caste is the worst enemy of Indian society and that is why everyone has married of his own...they have generally married a college mate or classmate. Meenu, elder daughter she married a Madrasi boy who unfortunately expired. Neelam, the second daughter, has married a Kerala, Syrian Christian, whatever it means...I don't know what it means. I never asked them. And Chitra, our youngest daughter has married a Punjabi boy.

0:42:04.736

This is how it is. Therefore, the influence of Tata has been quite a lot on me. And Gandhi, Nehru influence has been so tremendous...after...I must tell you...little personal note...when Jawaharlalji came to our college, we were in the front row, myself and my good friend Ranvir, who is now no more. I had a good look at Mr. Nehru and I said, 'This man is such a wonderful person, and he only talked this....a lady or a gentleman is one who, when he grows up and is in a position to give back to society, gives more to society than what he has received from society when he was a child.' This sentence I know is from GBS...Bernard Shaw, but this is what Panditji said. And he looked at the watch...which has given me two qualities...be punctual, and tremendous kind of....I used to dream about Jawaharlal. That I was his secretary. After I did my law from Nagpur, there were feelings...there were feelers...can you join Jawaharlal's personal staff. I said, no, I will not join because of various factors. Because at that time, I had done my law and gone to Wardha and



Sevagram and seen Gandhiji for two, three days and Jawaharlal and Kriplaniji and various other leaders which was an inspiring experience to me. It changed my life completely. That material goods are not what it is...I'm not bluffing. Material goods have no appeal...they have less appeal than what normally some crore I must have, some house I must have, some cars I must have. I had car, bungalow, all that, but I said enough is enough. This is the kind of thing that happened. I would like to show you the diploma we used to get after two and a half years...and this is the photograph of Sulochana after graduation and mine, after graduation. You can kindly see. I must tell you...when I passed and did the...all this convocation and passed and said namaste and all, now is the struggle that started in life. I had luckily, got scholarship in Tata Institute, and in my college also I used to get one scholarship. But I had taken a loan from my father. And I, being...having read about Gandhiji and all, I said no. I will never marry before I do various things. Mahatmaji had written two, three things...all young boys and girls must get medically checked up before they get married. All young boys and girls must have money in the bank before they get married. And all young boys and girls must marry of their own choice, preferably out of caste. I did all the three. I did my medical checkup. Shameful that they tested me for VD and all...I said no sir, I'm not that type, no no...Gandhi said, I will do that. I had 5000 Rs. in the bank. And I paid my loan back to my father and all that and then I said now we'll get married.

0:45:42.793

During this...my career with the multinational has been such that I was posted abroad...which was a real honour at that time. I went to West Indies. U.K of course was the headquarters, so I



stayed there for a few months, then I went to West Indies. Two years I stayed there, with children and all. West Indies is one society which completely flabbergasted me. As you would know, after Abraham Lincoln freed the people of African origin from slavery, they were so disgusted with slavery, they said they will never look at the earth. We will never take to agriculture. No person of African origin has taken to agriculture. But the British Imperial power was aware that the Indian kisan is deeply....he loves earth, and agriculture. Therefore they took indentured labour. Under a contract they took these people to Mauritius, Africa and West Indies, Surinam, Guyana...and one sudden morning I had got a scholarship to go to Colombo Plain, but it didn't materialize. They appointed me, but I said not somehow, it did not come through. One sudden morning I got a telegram...posted to West Indies. I did not know what West Indies was. I knew that Gary Sobers and Rohan Kanhai, they used to come and play in Bombay cricket, that's all that I knew. Then someone told me read a book called House of Mr. Biswas. I...that is V.S. Naipaul. I read that book and got an impression of what West Indies was. When I went to U.K., there was trouble about my work permit and all because there is a big rivalry between people of African origin and people of Indian origin. All the top things go to people of Indian origin because we are thrifty, we are hardworking, we get intelligence...we get good degrees and all that. Anyhow, I landed at Port of Spain and I went to...I looked at it...and you'll be surprised. People used to think we are gods because we are Indian citizens. And they used to say, in India what do you do....this, that and the other...and at Diwali time they would invite us to give lectures on what India is like. At Holi time, we will have our Vasant and Holi and Diwali which we don't celebrate here, but there, they are still celebrating. Hanuman Chalisa, which is a east U.P. poem and people like my father, devotees of Hanumanji, they recite every day, morning and evening and all. There Hanuman Chalisa is considered the Bible of society. And they used to



say, look these people have come from India, you see...What do you mean, what do you do? I used to tell them, if from Kanyakumari, we had to go to Kashmir, we will take three days and nights by train. So they said, what is a train? because Trinidad and Tobago...Trinidad is a 57 miles long island of the 18 islands in West Indies. And we used to talk about India and they would not be tired of listening about India. And how you...you people...your children talk English, you do this, you do that...and these were thoroughly enjoyable two years we spent. And we visited the entire East and West and whatever there was.

0:49:39.299

My friends, the struggle for career has been a lot. I must tell you that, my father, being in police, told me that you must only be a criminal advocate. And used to tell us stories about murder and investigation and all. And I loved criminal law. Dr. Reckless came to Tata Institute. He was a criminologist from some American University and I remember Dr. Mehta...he welcomed him and all. He said, Dr. Reckless, we are so delighted that you have studied the subject of crime in which your country specializes. We fell from the skies, that Dr., he's a guest...Dr. Mehta couldn't be checked by anybody. He was such a great spirit. And Dr. Reckless took 6 months course in criminology. I thought I'll become a Criminologist but somehow, I had by that time got into this PM and IR. All the big jail superintendents from India came and...they were all big officers and they used to treat us like (chokraboy) because we were students...we never had money. We used to dress up in ordinary pant and shirt and all, but they had money...they were mature people...50 years old, 40 years old and all that, but it was a great experience. I remember Mr.



Dogra used to be a jail superintendent in Delhi or somewhere. And we became very friendly. He used to tell us, Dr. Reckless aisa bolta hai, waisa bolta hai and all that kind of thing. Therefore, the social experience of being at the institute with friends and teachers was so exhilarating that the mind opened up. That the world is much bigger than the small little place which we do in B.A., M.A. and all that. Really, my ambition was to be a history professor at Allahabad University because my teacher, Prof. Tripathi who treated us like children...at that time the teacher-student relationship used to be just like father and child. On Sundays they will call us, give some khaana, some sweets they will give us, and Diwali time they will say, beta dekho, this is how...value system and all that. But, the same thing continued in Tata Institute much more, but because of Bombay city, the mind opened up. And that was a time when...of course, Sulochana was a Bombay girl. She was at Gowalia Tank when Gandhiji moved...when Jawaharlalji moved that Quit India Movement and she was a small child at that time. Because her house was just adjacent to Gowalia Tank. And they were all Congress people, Nationalist and all that and given to social reform and all that kind of thing. Luckily, she married me. But, she was good at Statistics, and I was Zero at Statistics. Dr. Lorenzo used to fire me. He gave a C. That's the only subject in which I got a C.

0:52:52.326

So Sulochana said, don't you know this approximation and all. I said, I don't know. She threw the book at me and said, you'll always fail in life. At that time, we had not decided to marry, so I said, look at this girl...she is throwing a book at me. But, anyhow, it went on. This is how things



went on. Two, three things happened in my life...one was Jawaharlal's visit and my visit to Sevagram and Wardha when I was in Nagpur doing my law, and the interaction. Second thing that happened to me was, admission to Tata Institute. Of course, in my personal life it became a great event, but even apart from that. And the third thing that happened was that I joined an MNC which gave me...getting posted to various places and all, it gave me quite a lot of confidence in life. Dr. Mehta, Dhanmay and Pathak and Blossom. These four individuals stick in my memory throughout. And now, after I left the MNC, I started practicing Law in Bangalore. But due to language difficulty, when I started, it was English, but now it has become local language, so I couldn't practice. But slowly, my name as a lecturer went up and many MBA courses, I address on my subject, on subjects of...slowly I became aware of one great factor. The welfare approach which was holding sway at the time we were studying was not the right philosophy. It meant that there was a superior being doing something to someone who is inferior out of goodness, out of his enlightened human nature and all that. Really, what must happen is, that an adult must be able to help himself. And if he requires guidance, he goes to specialists. That welfare approach...and I became a welfare officer. We all started as welfare officers and slowly we went up to become personnel managers. Then what happened was, I became aware that unless you have a general awareness of Indian society, you will not become an effective manager. If the present batch finds little merit in what I say, I would urge them to do so. Learn about India. I have tried to learn about India by practical experience because of Kriplaniji's letter, because of the fact that I find that there are deficiencies in our being, because we don't know India. India is so vastly, bewilderingly variant. I must tell you one real life...when ICS people were being trained in England, the last day, you will go to see the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State will tell the new boy, Look, son, you're going to India and you will see



whatever is there. What you see is true, but the opposite of that is also true. This is exactly what is happening in India. The great people, Tatas....there are exactly opposite people who are worse than criminals, worse than human beings, worse than animals. There are great people like Gandhi, there are exactly opposite people who are worse than animals. And therefore, when we want to make a general rule about India or Indian society, we will fail.

0:56:57.866

All laws, I know a little of Law...all laws are failing only because of the fact that Delhi wants to make a uniform rule for a variant....for a society which is so bewilderingly different, full of contradictions...we have got 1760 languages. Can you have a language policy? Although majority talk Hindi. You can't. You have Personal Civil Code, you can't have...because each caste or whatever we call has got its own morals. No one has done the social research. In fact, this is the first thing I want to...youngsters to...I can't say youngsters...my colleagues to learn is that India is so vast, that unless you get thick into the struggle, you will not know India. India is not in seminars, India is not in schools, India is somewhere in villages, India is somewhere where you have to rub your shoulders with the common man. Then, my friends, the second thing that must happen to us in India, the Indian citizen is that the welfare approach has nothing. I must grow. An Indian cannot take decisions. Look at the way they took our aircraft from Kathmandu to Amritsar and then these terrorists were traded. The man could not take decision. Because no Indian boy is allowed to take decision to marry the girl they want. I was very lucky, my father was a great man. That being in Marwad society, I took this photograph and told my father, I want



to marry this girl. My father had so much affection and confidence in me, he said good, our blessing is with you. She did the same to her parents. And they were of course Gujaratis, they were Bombay men and therefore they were more enlightened.